



Virginia Commission on Youth 2014 Legislative Studies and Initiatives

UNLAWFUL ADOPTION OF A CHILD FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ADOPTED RECOMMENDATIONS IN BLUE

Findings/Conclusions	Adopted Recommendations
<p>Finding 1 – Need for Preventive Services Virginia law does not currently acknowledge the existence of "re-homing," which occurs when a child is removed from one adoptive family and placed in another home. The new family transfers custody of the child without following established adoption procedures, including background checks and a home study, and frequently utilize websites like Yahoo and Facebook. These children are extremely vulnerable and are at great risk for human trafficking and abuse. Awareness about re-homing stemmed from a joint Reuters and NBC News investigation in 2013 revealing an underground market of adoptive parents seeking new families for children they no longer wish to parent.</p> <p>A major issue identified during the course of the study is that many adoptive parents are not fully aware of the emotional or physical well-being of the adoptive child and remain unaware of the</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Amend the <i>Code of Virginia</i> to require the State Registrar to furnish a document, to be compiled and annually reviewed by the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) listing post-adoptive services available to all adoptive families simultaneous to when any new birth certificate is issued due to adoption. Also, make this information available on the VDSS website. 2. Request the VDSS, with the support of the Office of Comprehensive Services for At-Risk Youth and Families, to allow regional requests for proposals rather than statewide requests for proposals for post-adoptive services. 3. Support the current funding level for post-adoptive services. 4. Request the VDSS, with the support of the Office of Comprehensive Services for At-Risk Youth and Families, to review existing policies and practices related to early prevention services. A report will be submitted to COY prior to the 2016 General Assembly Session. 5. Request the Governor to ensure there is adequate funding in the 2014-2016 Appropriations Act to fully implement the provisions of the federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008, which would extend foster care and adoption assistance until the age of 21. Doing so would allow the Commonwealth to draw down partial federal reimbursement for support of young adults in the 19 to 21 age group.

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<p>child's special needs at the time of adoption. Some of the primary issues cited by adoptive parents who had re-homed their adopted children according to the Reuters study include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – They were unprepared for the issues that their children presented; – The lack of available assistance to address these challenges; and – They were not prepared for the needs of their children prior to, and at the time of, the adoption. <p>One local department of social services stated that parents do not pursue post-adoptive services for fear that Child Protective Services will remove their child. In Virginia, the types of post-adoptive services range from adoptive parent support groups, children and youth support groups, therapy, and respite care.</p> <p>Post-adoptive services are provided through the Department of Social Services' grants. United Methodist Family Services manages and provides for the statewide services delivery of the Adoptive Family Preservation (AFP) network (\$1.5 million). There are two other post adoption services grants. The awardees are Frontier Health (\$300,000) and C.A.S.E. (\$192,967) from general funds. The request for proposals (RFP) for post-adoptive services comes up again for review next year.</p>	

**EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION – WORKGROUP ON QUALITY
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
ADOPTED RECOMMENDATIONS IN BLUE**

Findings/Conclusions	Adopted Recommendations
<p>Finding 1 – Lack of Coordination in Virginia’s Early Childhood Education Arena</p> <p>Virginia has a diverse array of early childhood education programs and initiatives located in public, private, home, and faith-based settings. Unlike K-12, there is wide variation in the delivery of early childhood programs under the auspices of multiple agencies and authorizing entities. Financing and policy support for Virginia’s early child care programs operate in “silos” – driven by separate funding streams, misaligned resources, and a lack systemic coordination.</p> <p>Virginia’s early childhood education programs and initiatives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF), – Statewide Smart Beginnings Network, – The Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI), – The Virginia Star Quality Initiative (VSQI), and – Federal Head Start programs. <p>These separate programs and initiatives present challenges with blending and braiding funding due to regulatory and funding guidelines. Improving quality across early learning settings will require collaboration across a fragmented system. The Commonwealth should develop strategies to reduce barriers between agency “silos” in an effort to improve access and collaboration. The coordination of the work efforts of the agencies and organizations involved in early childhood education can help identify partnerships, resources, and policies while reducing duplication of effort. A cross-sector committee would be helpful to achieve alignment and promote high-quality early childhood education.</p>	<p>1. Take No Action – Identified concerns can be addressed in the Recommendations offered for Finding 2.</p>

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<p>Finding 2 – Build quality by linking training/supports to teachers which emphasize their interactions with children</p> <p>Recent research studies have shown that the experiences children have in early care settings are essential to high-quality care. The quality of the child’s experience and quality of their interaction with the educator has the greatest impact upon achievement gains in early learning settings and have a disproportionately large effect on children’s school readiness outcomes.</p> <p>Research also indicates that children from lower income families especially benefit from classrooms with strong instructional support. Children in Pre-K classrooms offering higher levels of instructional support displayed better language skills at the end of the kindergarten year. Coursework and coaching on interactions produces gains in teaching and in children’s engagement, literacy, vocabulary, self-regulation and math skills. Quality can be improved through teacher coaching and ongoing professional development that focuses on high quality interactions, mentoring/feedback, skill building and curriculum. Focused teacher professional development and preparation can increase quality and children’s school readiness. Studies have substantiated such approaches yield “gap-closing experiences”. Technology can also be used as a tool to provide meaningful professional development.</p> <p>While there is no evidence that structural quality aspects (e.g., ratio, teacher credentials/degrees, etc.) drives student learning, it is important to note that structural requirements must not be ignored because they can be critical to ensure safety.</p> <p>There will be several opportunities over the coming year to enhance licensure and regulatory requirements in early learning. The reauthorization of the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and revisions to the Virginia Star Quality Initiative’s Standards offers the opportunity to examine ways to link quality improvement with standards/regulations for early learning providers.</p>	<p>1. Request the Board of Education partner with the Virginia Department of Social Services and the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF) to convene an interagency, cross-sector workgroup to be facilitated by the VECF. The workgroup shall develop a competency-based professional development framework to inform the requirements and guidelines for pre-service education, in-service education, and training for early learning practitioners in all of Virginia’s early learning settings. In developing the framework, the workgroup will review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professional support and in-service training proven to promote gains in children’s social and academic development; - <i>Virginia’s Quality Indicators for Responsive Teaching; Creating a High Quality Learning Environment</i> to ensure that teacher-child interactions and social/instructional supports are included as core competencies; - Efforts to build capacity with private partners that emphasize hiring teachers with such training; and - Revisions to Virginia’s Star Quality Standards which emphasize elements that demonstrate success including teacher preparation/professional development versus structural and/or physical plan components. <p>A task of the workgroup will also be to consider a child care system where all providers, including home-based providers, obtain a child care license. In addition, the workgroup shall ensure that Virginia meets all federal child care regulations. The workgroup shall make a final report on its activities to the Virginia Commission on Youth prior to the 2016 General Assembly Session.</p> <p><i>(Commission staff will update the Commission at the December 2 meeting on whether additional resources are necessary to accomplish this Recommendation.)</i></p> <p>Note – This Recommendation was modified at the December 2 Commission on Youth meeting. To view the changes, please click here or go to the December 2 meeting handouts and select <i>Changes to Early Childhood Recommendations</i>.</p>

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<p>Finding 3 – Improve Access to the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) VPI serves four-year-olds who are at-risk for school failure and not presently receiving services from Head Start.</p> <p>VPI has proven positive outcomes including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – increased literacy (only 6% of VPI participants need reading intervention in Kindergarten vs. 26% of those with no Pre- K experience); – reduced early grade repeaters (annual cost of repeaters K-3 in Virginia is approximately \$80 million); and – longer-term projections such as on-time grade promotion, which reduces likelihood of dropping out of high school. <p>There are 24,629 children in Virginia eligible for VPI and 18,021 children who participate in VPI. Of 135 school divisions, 131 are eligible for funding. Localities have identified classroom space and local match requirements as existing barriers to participation in VPI. As VDOE notes, the option is available for local school divisions to offer a mixed delivery system through local procurement contracts. However, given the desire to identify high quality private providers as partners with local school divisions to implement a mixed delivery approach, VDOE should provide guidance to localities to help identify the appropriate providers, incentivize partnership and monitor outcomes in private settings. Such guidance could come in the form of establishing a quality framework that outlines the standards of quality and methods for demonstrating quality.</p> <p>Another barrier to the utilization of state funds is allocation imbalances, meaning some school divisions have unused slots and others have waiting lists. Moreover, VPI allotments do not always correspond with educational costs. In some school divisions, the cost per pupil is \$10,000 to \$12,000 per student. However, the funding for VPI is set at \$6,000 per pupil slot. Moreover, there have been no evaluations conducted because this is not an allowable cost. There is also a lack of clarity around teacher qualifications in private settings.</p> <p>Nearly half of Virginia’s school divisions were interested in expanding access to Pre-K. However, local divisions also subsidize the cost</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Request the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) follow up on the previous study of VPI, review the funding formula and cost-per-child for VPI, and make recommendations to address barriers to access such as local match and facility space to achieve a balance between program quality and easing access for children in all regions across the Commonwealth.

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<p>when their true cost is more than the established \$6,000. Teacher salary/costs are comparable with K-12.</p> <p>VDOE no longer has funds to monitor quality in VPI classrooms. Potential solutions to increase VPI participation include addressing the allocation imbalance with unused slots and wait lists; acknowledging the true educational costs/local match requirements so that flexibility is built into the VPI formula; focusing on space limitations; and providing clarity for teacher qualifications in private settings.</p> <p>Localities have identified classroom space and local match requirements as existing barriers to participation in VPI. As VDOE notes, the option is available for local school divisions to offer a mixed delivery system through local procurement contracts. However, given the desire to identify high quality private providers as partners with local school divisions to implement a mixed delivery approach, VDOE should provide guidance to localities to help identify the appropriate providers, incentivize partnership and monitor outcomes in private settings. Such guidance could come in the form of establishing a quality framework that outlines the standards of quality and methods for demonstrating quality.</p>	
<p>Finding 4 – Improve Awareness of Gaps in Virginia’s High-Quality Early Childhood Education Programs</p> <p>While resources are in place, families have difficulty locating high-quality early learning programs. Multiple agency involvement is confusing to families. Moreover, families may assume that all child care/early care programs are licensed and not know how to locate high-quality programs in their community.</p> <p>Virginia has over 8,000 childcare providers with capacity to serve over 360,000 children. Mapping/linking programs that participate in Virginia’s Star Quality Initiative to areas of highest need would also show where there were regional gaps and help communicate the benefits of licensure to child care providers. Families may also be able to access other services through VPI such as health and nutrition services.</p>	<p>1. Support VDSS and VECF efforts to map all of the quality ratings for the participating early care programs across the state. Such mapping may help show regional gaps and help communicate the benefits of licensure to providers.</p>

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<p>Finding 5 – Address the lack of high-quality early childhood programs for geographically dispersed reserve and active-duty families</p> <p>According to the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, a key issue facing Service Members, especially those deployed overseas, is a shortage of quality child care options, especially for families not living near a military installation. Even for families with access to a military installation child care program, waiting lists are common. The situation is even more urgent for National Guard and Reserve members who are being called to active duty. These families usually live in communities far from military installations. In addition, there is a growing need for short-term respite care for families with a deployed member, especially those who were not living near their extended families. Virginia should improve efforts to link military families to high quality early child care.</p>	<p>1. Request the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and Homeland Security and the Secretary of Public Safety include access to high-quality early childhood education for Virginia's military families in all efforts seeking to improve services and programs for Virginia's military families.</p>
<p>Finding 6 – Comprehensive Kindergarten Assessment (Additional Finding)</p> <p>A competitive K-12 education system is critically important to Virginia's economy. States are competing against each other, and the world, for job-creating businesses. Businesses are looking for a highly skilled, trained, and educated workforce. All students should have the opportunity to be career-ready or college-ready when they graduate from high school. Decades of research indicate that investment in high quality early education is the best way to support improved academic outcomes in our K-12 and higher education systems.</p> <p>Every fall, over 10,000 of Virginia's children are arriving to kindergarten without the basic skills to succeed. Children who enter kindergarten behind their peers rarely catch up; instead, the achievement and readiness gaps widen over time. These children are more likely to fall behind grade-level expectations, be held back and drop out of high school. Additionally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The achievement and readiness gaps begin long before a child enters the kindergarten classroom; – Children not reading proficiently in third grade are four times more 	<p>1. Request the Secretary of Education, the VECF, and E3 present to VCOY the findings Virginia's Kindergarten Readiness Project (VKRP).</p>

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<p>likely not to graduate from high school;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 57% of Virginia’s incoming fourth graders score below proficient reading levels; – In Virginia, children who repeat grades K-3 cost taxpayers about \$80 million annually; and – High quality early education can close up to half the achievement gap. <p>Virginia has an opportunity to transform its early education, K-12, and higher education systems into as a continuum to build upon the Commonwealth’s nationally ranked education system to develop the world’s best workforce for the 21st Century.</p> <p>In August 2013, Elevate Early Education (E3) – a statewide advocacy movement created in 2012 by business, civic, and philanthropic leaders -in partnership with the Department of Education and the University of Virginia (UVA), launched a three-phased approach approved by the Governor and the General Assembly, to create a statewide, comprehensive kindergarten readiness assessment. The purpose of Virginia’s Kindergarten Readiness Project (VKRP) is to research and select an assessment tool that can be used statewide to assess readiness skills across a range of domains upon kindergarten entry. The VKRP involves piloting an assessment that will provide a snapshot of Virginia’s kindergarteners and clearly define the readiness gap; and, inform the implementation of a full-scale statewide comprehensive readiness assessment in the Commonwealth. Data from the assessment will be used to inform public policy and funding decisions in early childhood education.</p>	

USE OF RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION IN SCHOOLS
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
ADOPTED RECOMMENDATIONS IN BLUE

Findings/Conclusions	Adopted Recommendations
<p>Finding 1 – Finalize the <i>Proposed Regulations Governing the Operation of Private Day Schools for Students with Disabilities</i></p> <p>On June 27, 2013, the Board of Education (BOE) unanimously approved the proposed <i>Regulations Governing the Operation of Private Schools for Students with Disabilities</i> (8VAC20-671-10 et seq.). These regulations were drafted in response to legislation passed by the 2008 General Assembly requiring licensing agency to promulgate new regulations that govern the agency's role in serving students in group homes and residential facilities. BOE determined that a single set of regulations to govern the operation of all private schools for students with disabilities would be beneficial to placing agencies, licensing agencies, and parents seeking private placements. The proposed regulations also revised provisions pertaining to the use of seclusion and restraint. After much input from stakeholder organizations and families, the regulations included requirements that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the parent shall be informed on the day of each incident of physical restraint or seclusion; – the written report from an incident of restraint or seclusion will be made available to the parent within two business days of the occurrence and opportunity given for the parent and student, as appropriate, to discuss the matter with school staff; and – schools to annually report to the VDOE the number of times restraint and seclusion was used during the school year. <p>Additional requirements for managing student behavior in emergency situations when it was necessary to use restraint or seclusion were also included in the regulations.</p> <p>During the regulatory process, the VDOE held two audio conferences and received 152 written comments. Most comments were supportive of the recommendations submitted by the</p>	<p>1. Request that the Governor finalize Virginia's Proposed Regulations Governing the Operation of Private Day Schools for Students with Disabilities.</p>

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<p>Coalition for Students with Disabilities, a statewide network of organizations collaborating to support education rights and opportunities for students. The VDOE agreed with the Coalition's recommendations and addressed each in the proposed regulations. The proposed regulations were certified by the Office of the Attorney General and are currently being reviewed by the Governor's Office.</p>	
<p>Finding 2 – There is no statute or regulation specifically governing the use of seclusion and restraint in Virginia's public schools.</p> <p>According to the VDOE Guidelines issued in 2009, seclusion and restraint refer to safety procedures in which a student is isolated from others (seclusion) or physically held (restraint) in response to serious problem behavior that places the student or others at risk of injury or harm. There is no statute or regulation specifically governing the use of seclusion and restraint in Virginia's public schools.</p> <p>In 2006, the VDOE issued <i>Guidelines for the Development of Policies and Procedures for Managing Student Behaviors in Emergency Situations in Virginia Public Schools Focusing on Physical Restraint and Seclusion</i>. These Guidelines were updated in 2009 and a Superintendent's Memorandum requesting that all school divisions review these Guidelines was distributed to local school divisions. The VDOE encouraged school divisions to adopt its guidelines or develop policy regarding physical restraints and seclusion. The Guidelines outline what school divisions should include in their policies such as training requirements, inclusion of methods for preventing violent behavior, informing parents of policies, notifying parents when seclusion/restraint is used, time limits for notification monitoring requirements, follow-up procedures and reporting requirements.</p> <p>In August 2010, the Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA), a voluntary and nonpartisan organization of school boards, adopted a policy regarding restraints and seclusion – <i>Restraint and Seclusion of Students</i>. The VSBA policy addresses criteria and</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce legislation requiring the BOE to promulgate regulations on the use of seclusion and restraint in Virginia's public schools. These regulations will incorporate the 2009 DOE Guidelines and the U.S. DOE 15 Principles on Seclusion & Restraint and address definitions, criteria for use, restrictions for use, training, notification requirements, reporting, and follow-up. The regulations will also address the diverse population of students in the public school setting including students in the general education and special education populations and distinctions between primary and secondary schools including the students' emotional and physical developmental differences.

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<p>restrictions for use and notification and monitoring requirements. COY interviewed family members, advocates, and school officials. Concerns expressed about the VSBA policy include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – authorizing the use of seclusion/restraint as needed to quell a disturbance; – authorizing the use of seclusion/restraint as reasonably needed to prevent imminent destruction to school or another person's property; – lack of follow-up procedures; and – lack of timely notification and/or lack of parental notification (parents are notified within 15 school days of a restraint incident, and if seclusion is used, only when a physical injury occurs in the seclusion room). <p>The Commission on Youth conducted a survey of Virginia's school divisions during the summer of 2014 to determine which divisions had adopted policies. As of October 13, 2014, 114 of 134 school divisions responded to the survey. The survey revealed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 78 school divisions utilize the VSBA Policy on Restraint and Seclusion; – 9 have a separate school policy (non-VSBA) on seclusion and restraint; and – 27 school divisions have no policy on seclusion and restraint. Of these 27, two divisions noted they were drafting a policy, one noted they had documented procedures in place, and three school divisions responded that seclusion and restraint were not utilized. <p>Family members and advocacy organizations noted that Virginia's reliance upon guidelines means that there is discretion in handling incidents pertaining to the use of seclusion and restraint. The Guidelines recommend training for staff and notifying parents after restraint or seclusion has been utilized, but there is no enforcement of these provisions.</p> <p>While there is no statute or regulation specifically governing the use of seclusion and restraint in Virginia's public schools, there are regulations overseeing the use of seclusion and restraint for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Virginia's private schools for students with disabilities licensed 	

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<p>by DOE which oversee seclusion and restraint;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Children’s residential facilities and providers licensed by DBHDS; – Children’s residential facilities licensed by the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS); and – Juvenile correctional centers, detention homes, residential centers, group homes and halfway houses. <p>It is important to note that seclusion and restraint are more likely to be used with students with disabilities. According to the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights, students with disabilities represent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 12% of students enrolled in public schools; – 75% of the students who are subjected to physical restraint during school; and – 58% of students subjected to seclusion in school. <p>During interviews with school officials, concerns were raised regarding the need for flexibility. The majority of students attending Virginia’s public schools are in the general education population and do not receive special education services pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Any recommendation adopted by the Commission should not be a “one-size-fits-all” approach. The facility specifications of a public school with campus-style architecture are very different from many private school settings. Moreover, the emotional and physical developmental differences of students attending primary versus secondary schools must also be considered.</p> <p>School officials’ primary goal is to protect the safety of the students as well as that of educators/administrators/staff. Schools are becoming increasingly confronted with youth who exhibit challenging behaviors. For example, if it is mandated that training is required for all staff prior to use of restraint, school officials may hesitate intervening when there is a need to restrain a student for safety reasons (e.g., to break up a fight in the cafeteria). Schools also lack funding to train school personnel in costly proprietary crisis intervention and de-escalation techniques.</p>	

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<p>The U.S. Department of Education has identified 15 principles that states, local school divisions, parents, and other stakeholders should consider as the framework when implementing seclusion and restraint policies. These principles help assure that restraint or seclusion is used only if there is a threat of imminent danger of serious physical harm to the student or others and occur in a manner that protects the safety of all children and adults. These principles encourage schools to establish policies that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prevent the use of restraint and seclusion; 2. Prohibit the use mechanical and chemical restraint; 3. Prohibit the use unless the student poses imminent danger of serious physical harm to self or others and other interventions are ineffective, and should be discontinued when imminent danger dissipates; 4. Apply to all children; 5. Are consistent with the students' rights to be treated with dignity; 6. Assures seclusion and restraint is never used as punishment, discipline, coercion, retaliation, or for convenience; 7. Assures that restraint is never used in manner that restricts breathing (prone restraint); 8. Trigger review and potential revision of strategies currently in place to address dangerous behavior and the implementation of positive behavioral strategies, if deemed necessary; 9. Incorporate behavioral strategies to address the underlying cause or function/purpose of behaviors; 10. Encourage regular training for teachers/school personnel; 11. Establish careful and continuous visual monitoring; 12. Inform parents of policies and applicable laws; 13. Notify parents as soon as possible after each incident; 14. Establish regular review and update, if appropriate, of existing policies; and 15. Create documentation and data collection requirements. 	

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<p>Finding 3 – Encourage Training Efforts</p> <p>Training is available for purposes of reducing the use of seclusion and restraint in schools. These training programs use positive interventions, conflict resolution, and de-escalation in an effort to prevent or limit the use of seclusion and restraint. The overall idea behind such training programs is that environments in which de-escalation or other positive means are used are healthier for students and employees alike. Furthermore, it is posited that the use of tactics such as the ones found in the training may reduce the number incidences. This training provides educators with a process to look at and treat the cause of behavioral issues rather than reacting to specific outbreaks.</p> <p>De-escalation is a process of handling a crisis in a way that removes tension from the environment and calms the aggressor without an escalation in physical force or power. The end result is to calm an enraged or out-of-control individual to the point of having a beneficial discussion. This discussion attempts to curb future undesirable behavior and opens a dialogue for expression.</p> <p>A majority of school divisions in Virginia employ training programs that utilize de-escalation techniques with the goal of reducing the use of physical force. By providing educators and staff with the necessary tools to effectively deal with potentially violent or belligerent students, out of control situations may be more readily avoided. Listed below are just a few of those training programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – MANDT – Non-Violent Conflict Intervention (NCI) – Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) – Applied Crisis Training (ACT) – Handle with Care – Managing Aggressive Training <p>School divisions in Virginia are implementing training efforts for staff in relation to de-escalation and handling a crisis. The Commission on Youth surveyed 134 school divisions and found that 100 of the 114 responding school divisions provide staff de-escalation training. This training was offered to staff members authorized to implement seclusion and restraint.</p> <p>The main concern associated with mandating school-wide training is</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support DCJS efforts in training appropriate parties, including SROs and SSOs, in student development, de-escalation, and conflict mediation in the school setting. 2. Request DOE support local school divisions by providing resources and training on research-based appropriate behavioral management, prevention, de-escalation techniques to reduce the use of seclusion and restraint.

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<p>the cost. School divisions both nationally and in the Commonwealth have expressed concerns regarding the costs of providing such training. In 2012, the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) published a study – <i>Keeping Schools Safe: Ensuring Federal Policy Supports School Safety</i>. In an analysis of school districts across the country, the AASA used specific examples of school districts to exemplify the actual dollar amount it would take to train staff members. Loudoun County in Virginia, comprised of 9,000 employees, reported a potential cost in excess of \$120,000 for the initial training, test, and follow-up refresher course provided by the MANDT program. If such training were to become mandated, many school divisions would struggle to maintain the necessary levels of training. According to the AASA report, 81% of school districts across the country report being inadequately funded.</p> <p>Virginia’s School Security Officers (SSOs) licensed by the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Service (DCJS) also receive training on de-escalation techniques. Among other requirements, standard training for SSOs includes knowledge of pertinent state and federal laws, mediation and conflict resolution, and student behavioral dynamics. In addition, Virginia’s School Resource Officers (SROs) received extensive training. As a minimum requirement, SROs must be trained in the use of restraints in regards to juveniles and youth with special needs. DCJS also regularly hosts Autism Awareness Train-the-Instructor courses.</p>	